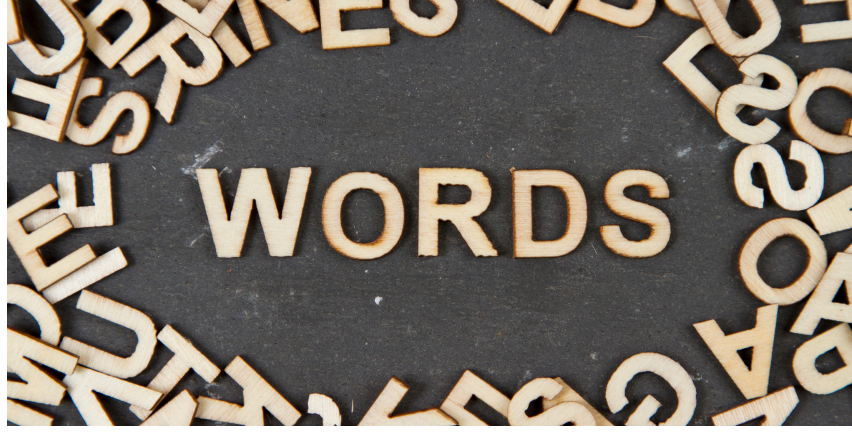


# WHAT TO SAY WHAT NOT TO SAY



## What to say...

Before we go any further, even if you don't read or take on board anything else, here are some initial words to say - Remember 'TED':

- **T**ell me
- **E**xplain
- **D**escribe

These words will help open up conversations and will let the griever know you're ready to listen.

Sometimes the person grieving won't feel like talking at that particular moment but by acknowledging what they're going through, you're signalling that you're there for them to share their feelings and stories.

Here are some more useful words:

- What happened?
- Can you tell me a little about it?
- I can only imagine how... painful/devastating/heartbreaking that has been for you.
- I'm sorry, it's awful, I can't imagine what you're going through, there are no words of comfort that will help right now

Show with your body language, if you are there for them. If it's a neighbour, demonstrate it with small kindnesses, the odd bit of shopping for basics, inviting them for tea and a chat, offer to run errands. stopping in the street to ask how they are, and really listening to their answer. The worst thing you can do is just ignore or avoid them.

## What not to say...

- Don't say any of the standard platitudes which are actually to make YOU, rather than the bereaved, feel better, for example.
- "She had a good life, a good innings, she's not suffering any more, she wouldn't want you to be sad, etc."
- Don't offer a religious interpretation, e.g. "She's with Jesus. She'll be watching over you."
- "Time heals" or "move on" Don't say, nor imply, that it helps to let go.
- "I'm here for you" unless you will be. I have met many people who feel let down having heard that.
- "I understand", then tell a story about your own loss.